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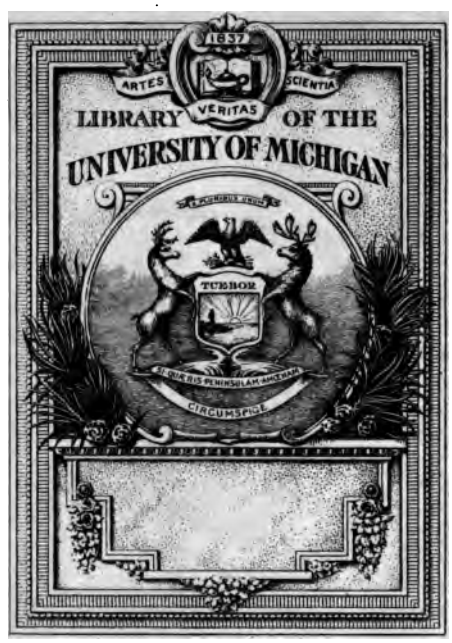
FACSIMILE REPRINT OF

COMUS, A MASKE

By JOHN MILTON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Literature Series, No. I

MILTON'S "COMUS," 1637

This Edition is limited to Five Hundred and Twenty Copies, of which Twenty are on Japan paper

COMUS

"*A Maske* Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634"

By JOHN MILTON

Reproduced in *Facsimile* from the First Edition of 1637

With an Introductory Note by

LUTHER S. LIVINGSTON

NEW YORK
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Introductory Note

MILTON'S little play *Comus*, the first edition of which is herewith reproduced in facsimile, is the author's first book and, after *Paradise Lost*, is considered his most important work. In this first edition, as will be seen, it is called simply "A Maske presented at Ludlow Castle," etc., and in the two collected editions of Milton's minor Poems published during his lifetime, the first in 1645 and the second in 1673, the title is the same. *Comus*, the name of one of the principal characters, was, it seems, given to the "Maske" by some later editor.

At the time *Comus* was written and acted, "1634, on Michaelmasse Night," the 29th of September, Milton was in his twenty-sixth year. Although he had already written a number of pieces both in English and Latin, only one had, apparently, been printed. This was his little poem of sixteen lines, *An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatick Poet, W. Shakespeare*, which is found, but without author's name, among the prefatory verses in the Second Folio, printed in 1632.

Even when this little play was printed in 1637 Milton seems to have been diffident about acknowledging the authorship. It was very probably printed with his permission, as the motto on the title, from Virgil, was evidently selected by him. Masson paraphrases this:

> "Ah! wretched and undone! Myself to have brought
> The wind among my flowers!"

The dedication, it will be noticed, is written and signed by H. Lawes, whose reason for printing is said to be "that

the often copying of it hath tir'd my pen to give my severall friends satisfaction." This Lawes was one of the most famous composers of music of the time in England, and it was under his direction and to his music that the "Maske" was produced at Ludlow Castle. The occasion was the celebration of the entry of the Earl of Bridgewater upon the Welsh Presidency, and the place was the Great Hall of Ludlow Castle, in which, according to tradition, the elder of the two Princes murdered in the Tower had been proclaimed King, with the title of Edward V, before commencing his fatal journey to London.

The play contains six speaking parts only. Of these, the most important, "The Attendant Spirit," was taken by Lawes, the director of the play and author of the music. The part of "The Lady" was taken by Lady Alice Egerton, youngest daughter of the Earl, then about fifteen years of age. The parts of the "Elder Brother" and the "Second Brother" were played by the two younger brothers of Lady Alice, Viscount Brackley, to whom this printed edition is dedicated, and Mr. Thomas Egerton. These two young noblemen had already had a taste of stage acting, having taken juvenile parts in Carew's *Coelum Britannicum*, which had been performed the previous February in the royal Banqueting-house at Whitehall, in which the King himself, Charles I, took part.

The stage-copy, or one of them, perhaps in Lawes' own autograph, is still preserved in the library at Bridgewater House, and the music of five of the six songs, in Lawes' own autograph, is in the British Museum.

An earlier draft of the poem in Milton's own handwriting is preserved in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge, in that precious thin folio of forty-six pages (besides eight blank pages), mostly in Milton's own hand, and containing all but a few of the minor English Poems.

The first edition is, needless to say, very rare, only one copy having been offered at auction in America. That, a fine one, bound by Matthews, brought $425.00 in the Ives

sale in 1891. A copy sold at Sotheby's in 1894, in the sale of the library of Sir Joseph Hawley, brought £123, and another in 1899, from the library of the Rev. William Makellar, brought £150. This latter copy is now in the library of Mr. E. D. Church, of New York city. We are indebted to him for the privilege of making this facsimile.

L. S. L.

A MASKE

PRESENTED

At Ludlow Castle,

1634:

On Michaelmasse night, before the

RIGHT HONORABLE,

IOHN *Earle of Bridgewater, Vicount* BRACKLY, *Lord Præsident of* WALES, And one of His MAIESTIES most honorable Privie Counsell.

Eheu quid volui misero mihi: floribus austrum
Perditus ———

LONDON,
Printed for HVMPHREY ROBINSON, at the signe of the *Three Pidgeons* in *Pauls Church-yard.* 1637.

TO THE RIGHT *HONORABLE*, IOHN *Lord Vicount* BRACLY,

Son and heire apparent to the Earle, *of Bridgewater, &c.*

MY LORD,

THis Poem, which receiv'd its first occasion of birth from your selfe, and others of your noble familie, and much honour from your own Person in the performance, now returns againe to make a finall dedication of it selfe to you. Although not openly acknowledg'd by the Author, yet it is a legitimate off-spring, so lovely, and so much desired, that the often copying of it hath tir'd my pen to give my severall

friends satisfaction, and brought me to a necessitie of producing it to the publick view; and now to offer it up in all rightfull devotion to those faire hopes, and rare Endowments of your much-promising Youth, which give a full assurance, to all that know you, of a future excellence. Live sweet Lord to be the honour of your Name, and receive this as your owne, from the hands of him, who hath by many favours beene long oblig'd to your most honour'd Parents, and as in this repræsentation your attendant Thyrsis, *so now in all reall expression*

Your faithfull, and most

humble Servant,

H. LAVVES.

A MASKE
PERFORMED BEFORE the Præsident of WALES at *Ludlow*, 1634.

The first Scene discovers a wild wood.

The attendant Spirit descends or enters.

BEfore the starrie threshold of *Ioves* Court
My mansion is, where those immortall shapes
Of bright aëreall Spirits live insphear'd
In Regions mild of calme and serene aire,
Above the smoake and stirre of this dim spot
Which men call Earth, and with low-thoughted care
Confin'd, and pester'd in this pin-fold here,
Strive to keepe up a fraile, and feaverish being
Vnmindfull of the crowne that Vertue gives
After this mortall change to her true Servants
Amongst the enthron'd gods on Sainted seats.
Yet some there be that by due steps aspire

To lay their just hands on that golden [illegible]
That ope's the palace of Æternity:
To such my errand is, and but for such
I would not soile these pure ambrosial weeds
With the ranck vapours of this Sin-worne mould.
But to my task. *Neptune* besides the sway
Of every salt Flood, and each ebbing Streame
Tooke in my lot 'twixt high, and neather *Love*
Imperial rule of all the Sea-girt Iles
That like to rich, and various gemms inlay
The unadorned bosome of the Deepe,
Which he to grace his tributarie gods
By course commits to severall government
And gives them leave to weare their Saphire crowns,
And weild their little tridents, but this Ile
The greatest, and the best of all the maine
He quarters to his blu-hair'd deities,
And all this tract that fronts the falling Sun
A noble Peere of mickle trust, and power
Has in his charge, with temper'd awe to guide
An old, and haughtie Nation proud in Armes:
Where his faire off-spring nurs't in Princely lore
Are comming to attend their Fathers state,
And new-entrusted Seepter, but their way
Lies through the perplex't paths of this dreare wood,
The nodding horror of whose shadie brows
Threats the forlorne and wandring Passinger.
And here their tender age might suffer perill
But that by quick command from Soveraigne *Love*
I was dispatcht for their defence, and guard,
And listen why, for I will tell yee now
What never yet was heard in Tale or Song

From

From old, or moderne Bard in hall, or bowre.
Bacchus that first from out the purple Grape
Crush't the sweet poyson of mis-used Wine
After the *Tuscan* Mariners transform'd
Coasting, the *Tyrrhene* shore, as the winds lifted,
On *Circes* Iland fell (who knowes not *Circe*
The daughter of the Sun? whose charmed Cup
Whoever tasted lost his upright shape,
And downward fell into a grovling Swine)
This Nymph that gaz'd upon his clustring locks
With Ivie berries wreath'd, and his blith youth
Had by him, ere he parted thence, a Son
Much like his Father, but his Mother more,
Whom therefore she brought up and *Comus* nam'd,
Who ripe, and frolick of his full growne age
Roaving the *Celtick*, and *Iberian* fields
At last betakes him to this ominous wood,
And in thick shelter of black shades imbowr'd
Excells his Mother at her mightie Art
Offring to every wearie Travailer
His orient liquor in a Chrystall glasse
To quench the drouth of *Phœbus*, which as they tast
(For most doe tast through fond intemperate thirst)
Soone as the Potion works, their humane count'nance
Th'expresse resemblance of the gods is chang'd
Into some brutish forme of Wolfe, or Beare
Or Ounce, or Tiger, Hog, or bearded Goat,
All other parts remaining as they were,
And they, so perfect in their miserie,
Not once perceive their foule disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely then before
And all their friends, and native home forget

To roule with pleasure in a sensuall stie.
Therefore when any favour'd of high *Iove*
Chances to passe through this adventrous glade,
Swift as the Sparkle of a glancing Starre
I shoote from heav'n to giue him safe convoy,
As now I doe: but first I must put off
These my skie robes spun out of *Iris* wooffe,
And take the weeds and likenesse of a Swaine,
That to the service of this house belongs,
Who with his soft Pipe, and smooth-dittied Song,
Well knows to still the wild winds when they roare,
And hush the waving woods, nor of lesse faith,
And in this office of his Mountaine watch,
Likeliest, and neerest to the present aide
Of this occasion. But I heare the tread
Of hatefull steps, I must be viewlesse now.

Comus *enters with a Charming rod in one hand, his Glasse in the other, with him a rout of Monsters headed like sundry sorts of wilde Beasts, but otherwise like Men and Women, their apparell glistring, they come in making a riotous and vnruly noise, with Torches in their hands.*

Comus. The starre that bids the Shepheard fold,
Now the top of heav'n doth hold,
And the gilded Carre of Day
His glowing Axle doth allay,
In the steepe *Atlantik* streame,
And the slope Sun his upward beame
Shoots against the duskie Pole,
Pacing toward the other gole

Of his Chamber in the East.
Meane while welcome Joy, and Feast,
Midnight shout, and revelrie,
Tipsie dance, and Jollitie.
Braid your Locks with rosie Twine,
Dropping odours, dropping Wine.
Rigor now is gone to bed,
And Advice with scrupulous head,
Strict Age, and sowre Severitie
With their graue Sawes in slumber lie.
We that are of puer fire,
Immitate the starrie quire,
Who in their nightly watchfull Spheares,
Lead in swift round the Months and Yeares.
The Sounds, and Seas with all their finnie drove,
Now to the Moone in wavering Morrice move,
And on the tawny sands and shelves,
Trip the pert Fairies and the dapper Elves;
By dimpled Brooke, and Fountaine brim,
The Wood-nymphs deckt with daisies trim,
Their merry wakes, and pastimes keepe,
What hath night to doe with sleepe?
Night hath better sweets to prove,
Venus now wakes, and wakens Love.
Come let us our rights begin
'Tis onely day-light that makes Sin
Which these dun shades will ne're report.
Haile Goddesse of Nocturnall sport
Dark-vaild *Cotytto*, t'whom the secret flame
Of mid-night Torches burnes; mysterious Dame
That ne're at call'd, but when the Dragon woome
Of Stygian darknesse spets her thickest gloome

And makes one blot of all the aire,
Stay thy clowdie *Ebon* chaire,
Wherein thou rid'ſt with *Hecat'*, and befriend
Vs thy vow'd Prieſts, till utmoſt end
Of all thy dues be done, and none left out
Ere the blabbing Eaſterne ſcout
The nice Morne on th'*Indian* ſteepe
From her cabin'd loop hole peepe,
And to the tel-tale Sun diſcry
Our conceal'd Solemnity.
Come, knit hands, and beate the ground
In a light fantaſtick round.

The Meaſure.

Breake off, breake off, I feele the different pace
Of ſome chaſt footing neere about this ground,
Run to your ſhrouds, within theſe Brakes, and Trees
Our number may affright: Some Virgin ſure
(For ſo I can diſtinguiſh by mine Art)
Benighted in theſe woods. Now to my charmes
And to my wilie trains, I ſhall e're long
Be well ſtock't with as faire a Heard as graz'd
About my Mother *Circe*. Thus I hurle
My dazling Spells into the ſpungie aire
Of power to cheate the eye with bleare illuſion,
And give it falſe preſentments, left the place
And my queint habits breed aſtoniſhment,
And put the Damſel to ſuſpicious flight,
Which muſt not be, for that's againſt my courſe;
I under faire prætents of friendly ends,
And wel plac't words of glozing courteſie
Baited with reaſons not unplauſible

Wind

Wind me into the easie hearted man,
And hug him into snares; when once her eye
Hath met the vertue of this Magick dust,
I shall appeare some harmlesse Villager
Whom thrift keepes up about his Country geare
But here she comes, I fairly step aside
And hearken, if I may, her buisnesse here.

The Ladie enters.

This way the noise was, if mine eare be true
My best guide now, me thought it was the sound
Of Riot, and ill manag'd Merriment,
Such as the jocond Flute, or gamesome Pipe
Stirs up among the loose unleter'd Hinds
When for their teeming Flocks, and granges full
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous *Pan*,
And thanke the gods amisse. I should be loath
To meet the rudenesse, and swill'd insolence
Of suoh late Wassailers; yet ô where else
Shall I informe my unacquainted feet
In the blind mazes of this tangled wood?
My Brothers when they saw me wearied out
With this long way, resolving here to lodge
Vnder the spreading favour of these Pines
Stept as they se'd to the next Thicket side
To bring me Berries, or such cooling fruit
As the kind hospitable woods provide.
They left me then, when the gray-hooded Ev'n
Like a sad Votarist in Palmers weeds,
Rose from the hindmost wheels of *Phœbus* waine.
But where they are, and why they came not back
Is now the labour of my thoughts, 'tis likeliest

They

They had ingag'd their wandring steps too far,
And envious darknesse, e're they could returne,
Had stolne them fromme, else ô theevish Night
Why shouldst thou, but for some fellonious end
In thy darke lanterne thus close up the Stars,
That nature hung in Heav'n, and fill'd their lamps
With everlasting oile to give due light
To the misled, and lonely Travailer.
This is the place, as well as I may guesse
Whence even now the tumult of loud Mirth
Was rife, and perfect in my listening eare,
Yet nought but single darknesse doe I find,
What might this be? a thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memorie
Of calling shapes, and beckning shadows dire,
And ayrie tongues, that syllable mens names
On Sands, and Shoars, and desert Wildernesses.
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound
The vertuous mind, that ever walks attended
By a strong siding champion Conscience. ——
O welcome pure-ey'd Faith, white-handed Hope
Thou flittering Angel girt with golden wings,
And thou unblemish't forme of Chastitie
I see yee visibly, and now beleeve
That he, the Supreme good, t'whom all things ill
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance
Would send a glistring Guardian if need were
To keepe my life, and honour unassail'd.
Was I deceiv'd, or did a sable cloud
Turne forth her silver lining on the night?
I did not erre, there does a sables cloud
Turne forth her silver lining on the night

And

And casts a gleame over this tufted Grove.
I cannot hallow to my Brothers, but
Such noise as I can make to be heard fardest
Ile venter, for my new enliv'nd spirits
Prompt me; and they perhaps are not farre off.

Song.

Sweet echo, sweetest Nymph that liv'st unseene
Within thy ayrie shell
By slow Meander's *margent greene,*
And in the violet-imbroider'd vale
Where the love-lorne Nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad Song mourneth well.

Canst thou not tell me of a gentle Paire
That likest thy Narcissus *are?*
O if thou have
Hid them in some flowrie Cave,
Tell me but where
Sweet Queen of Parlie, Daughter of the Sphere,
So maist thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all Heav'ns Harmonies.

Com. Can any mortall mixture of Earths mould
Breath such Divine inchanting ravishment?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
And with these raptures moves the vocal aire
To testifie his hidden residence;
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of Silence, through the emptie-vaulted night
At every fall smoothing the Raven downe
Of darknesse till she smil'd: I have oft heard

My mother *Circe* with the Sirens three
Amidst the flowrie-kirtl'd *Naiades*
Culling their Potent hearbs, and balefull drugs
Who as they sung, would take the prison'd soule
And lap it in *Elysium*, *Scylla* wept,
And chid her barking waves into attention,
And fell *Charybdis* murmur'd soft applause:
Yet they in pleasing slumber lull'd the sense
And in sweet madnesse rob'd it of it selfe,
But such a sacred, and home-felt delight,
Such sober certainty of waking blisse
I never heard till now. Ile speake to her
And she shall be my Queene. Haile forreine wonder
Whom certaine these rough shades did never breed
Vnlesse the Goddesse that in rurall shrine
Dwell'st here with *Pan*, or *Silvan*, by blest Song
Forbidding every bleake unkindly Fog
To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.

La. Nay gentle Shepherd ill is lost that praise
That is addrest to unattending Eares,
Not any boast of skill, but extreame shift
How to regaine my sever'd companie
Compell'd me to awake the courteous Echo
To give me answer from her mossie Couch.

Co. What chance good Ladie hath bereft you thus?

La. Dim darknesse, and this leavie Labyrinth.

Co. Could that divide you from neere-usherling (guides?

La. They left me weary on a grassie terse.

Co. By falshood, or discourtesie, or why?

La. To seeke i'th vally some coole friendly Spring.

Co. And left your faire side-all unguarded Ladie?

La. They were but twain, & purpos'd quick return.

Co.

Co. Perhaps fore-ſtalling night prævented them.
La. How eaſie my misfortune is to hit!
Co. Imports their loſſe, beſide the præſent need?
La. No leſſe then it I ſhould my brothers loſe.
Co. Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?
La. As ſmooth as *Hebe's* their unrazord lips.
Co. Two ſuch I ſaw, what time the labour'd Oxe
In his looſe traces from the furrow came,
And the ſwink't hedger at his Supper ſate;
I ſaw them under a greene mantling vine
That crawls along the ſide of yon ſmall hill,
Plucking ripe cluſters from the tender ſhoots,
Their port was more then humaine; as they ſtood,
I tooke it for a faërie viſion
Of ſome gay creatures of the element
That in the colours of the Rainbow live
And play i'th plighted clouds, I was aw-ſtrooke,
And as I paſt, I worſhipt; if thoſe you ſeeke
It were a journy like the path to heav'n
To helpe you find them. *La.* Gentle villager
What readieſt way would bring me to that place?
Co. Due weſt it riſes from this ſhrubbie point.
La. To find out that good ſhepheard I ſuppoſe
In ſuch a ſcant allowance of ſtarre light
Would overtask the beſt land-pilots art
Without the ſure gueſſe of well-practiz'd feet.
Co. I know each lane, and every alley greene
Dingle, or buſhie dell of this wild wood,
And every boskie bourne from ſide to ſide
My daylie walks and ancient neighbourhood,
And if your ſtray attendance be yet lodg'd
Or ſhroud within theſe limits, I ſhall know

Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted larke
From her thach't palate rowse, if otherwise
I can conduct you Ladie to a low
But loyall cottage, where you may be safe
Till further quest'. *La.* Shepheard I take thy word,
And trust thy honest offer'd courtesie,
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds
With smoakie rafters, then in tapstrie halls,
And courts of Princes, where it first was nam'd,
And yet is most prætended: in a place
Lesse warranted then this, or lesse secure
I cannot be, that I should feare to change it,
Eye me blest Providence, and square my triall
To my proportion'd strength. Shepheard lead on.—

The two Brothers.

Eld bro. Vnmuffle yee faint stars, and thou fair moon
That wontst to love the travailers benizon
Stoope thy pale visage through an amber cloud
And disinherit *Chaos*, that raigns here
In double night of darknesse, and of shades;
Or if your influence be quite damm'd up
With black usurping mists, some gentle taper
Though a rush candle from the wicker hole
Of some clay habitation visit us
With thy long levell'd rule of streaming light
And thou shalt be our starre of *Arcadie*
Or *Tyrian* Cynosure. 2 *Bro.* Or if our eyes
Be barr'd that happinesse, might we but heare
The folded flocks pen'd in their watled cotes,
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,
Or whistle from the Lodge, or village cock

Count

Count the night watches to his featherie Dames,
T'would be some solace yet, some little chearing
In this close dungeon of innumerous bowes.
But ô that hapleſſe virgin our loſt ſiſter
Where may ſhe wander now, whether betake her
From the chill dew, amongſt rude burs and thiſtles?
Perhaps ſome cold banke is her boulſter now
Or 'gainſt the rugged barke of ſome broad Elme
Leans her unpillow'd head fraught with ſad fears.
What if in wild amazement, and affright
Or while we ſpeake within the direfull graſpe
Of Savage hunger, or of Savage heat?
Eld: bro. Peace brother, be not over exquiſite
To caſt the faſhion of uncertaine evils;
For grant they be ſo, while they reſt unknowne
What need a man foreſtall his date of griefe
And run to meet what he would moſt avoid?
Or if they be but falſe alarms of Feare
How bitter is ſuch ſelfe-deluſion?
I doe not thinke my ſiſter ſo to ſeeke
Or ſo unprincipl'd in vertues book
And the ſweet peace that goodneſſe boſoms ever
As that the ſingle want of light, and noiſe
(Not being in danger, as I truſt ſhe is not)
Could ſtir the conſtant mood of her calme thoughts
And put them into miſ-becomming plight.
Vertue could ſee to doe what vertue would
By her owne radiant light, though Sun and Moon
Were in the flat Sea ſunck, and Wiſdoms ſelfe
Oft ſeeks to ſweet retired Solitude
Where with her beſt nurſe Contemplation
She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings

That in the various bustle of resort
Were all to ruffl'd, and sometimes impair'd.
He that has light within his owne cleere brest
May sit i'th center, and enjoy bright day,
But he that hides a darke soule, and foule thoughts
Benighted walks under the mid-day Sun,
Himselfe is his owne dungeon.

2. *Bro.* 'Tis most true
That musing meditation most affects
The Pensive secrecie of desert cell
Farre from the cheerefull haunt of men, and heards,
And sits as safe as in a Senat house
For who would rob an Hermit of his weeds
His few books, or his beades, or maple dish,
Or doe his gray hairs any violence?
But beautie like the faire Hesperian tree
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
Of dragon watch with uninchanted eye
To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit
From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.
You may as well spread out the unsun'd heaps
Of misers treasure by an outlaws den
And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope
Danger will winke on opportunitie
And let a single helplesse mayden passe
Vninjur'd in this wild surrounding wast.
Of night, or lonelynesse it recks me not
I feare the dred events that dog them both,
Lest some ill greeting touch attempt the person
Of our unowned sister.

Eld. Bro. I doe not brother
Inferre, as if I thought my sisters state

Secure

Secure without all doubt, or controverſie:
Yet where an equall poiſe of hope, and feare
Does arbitrate th'event, my nature is
That I encline to hope, rather then feare
And gladly baniſh ſquint ſuſpicion.
My ſiſter is not ſo defenceleſſe left
As you imagine, ſhe has a hidden ſtrength
Which you remember not.

2. *Bro.* What hidden ſtrength
Vnleſſe the ſtrength of heav'n, if meane that?

Eld. Bro. I meane that too, but yet a hidden ſtrength
Which if heav'n gave it, may be term'd her owne:
'Tis chaſtitie, my brother, chaſtitie:
She that has that, is clad in compleat ſteele,
And like a quiver'd nymph with arrowes keene
May trace huge forreſts, and unharbour'd heaths
Infamous hills, and ſandie perillous wilds
Where through the ſacred rays of chaſtitie
No ſavage fierce, bandite, or mountaneete
Will dare to ſoyle her virgin puritie
Yea there, where very deſolation dwells
By grots, and caverns ſhag'd with horrid ſhades
She may paſſe on with unblench't majeſtie
Be it not done in pride, or in preſumption.
Some ſay no evill thing that walks by night
In fog, or fire, by lake, or mooriſh fen
Blew meager hag, or ſtubborne unlayd ghoſt
That breaks his magicke chaines at curfeu time
No goblin, or ſwart Faërie of the mine
Has hurtfull power ore true virginity.
Doe yee beleeve me yet, or ſhall I call
Antiquity from the old ſchools of Greece

To

To testifie the armes of Chastitie?
Hence had the huntresse *Dian* her dred bow
Faire silver-shafted Queene for ever chast
Wherewith we tam'd the brinded lionesse
And spotted mountaine pard, but set at nought
The frivolous bolt of *Cupid*, gods and men
Fear'd her sterne frowne, & she was queen oth' woods.
What was that snakie headed *Gorgon* sheild
That wise *Minerva* wore, unconquer'd virgin
Wherewith she freez'd her foes to congeal'd stone?
But rigid looks of Chast austeritie
And noble grace that dash't brute violence
With sudden adoration, and blancke aw.
So deare to heav'n is saintly chastitie
That when a soule is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried angels lackie her
Driving farre off each thing of sinne, and guilt,
And in cleere dreame, and solemne vision
Tell her of things that no grosse eare can heare,
Till oft converse with heav'nly habitants
Begin to cast a beame on th' outward shape
The unpolluted temple of the mind
And turnes it by degrees to the souls essence
Till all bee made immortall; but when lust
By unchast looks, loose gestures, and foule talke
But most by leud, and lavish act of sin
Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
The foule growes clotted by contagion,
Imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite loose
The divine propertie of her first being.
Such are those thick, and gloomie shadows damp
Oft seene in Charnell vaults, and Sepulchers

Hovering,

Hovering, and ſitting by a new made grave
As loath to leave the body that it lov'd,
And link't it ſelfe by carnall ſenſualitie
To a degenerate and degraded ſtate.

2 *Bro.* How charming is divine Philoſophie!
Not harſh, and crabbed as dull fools ſuppoſe,
But muſicall as is *Apollo's* lute,
And a perpetuall feaſt of nectar'd ſweets
Where no crude ſurfet raigns. *El: bro.* Liſt, liſt I heare
Some farre off hallow breake the ſilent aire.

2 *Bro.* Me thought ſo too, what ſhould it be?

Eld: bro. For certaine
Either ſome one like us night founder'd here,
Or elſe ſome neighbour wood man, or at worſt
Some roaving robber calling to his fellows.

2 *Bro.* Heav'n keepe my ſiſter, agen agen and neere,
Beſt draw, and ſtand upon our guard.

Eld: bro. Ile hallow,
If he be friendly he comes well, if not
Defence is a good cauſe, and Heav'n be for us.

The attendant Spirit habited like a ſhepheard.

That hallow I ſhould know, what are you, ſpeake,
Come not too neere, you fall on iron ſtakes elſe.

Spir. What voice is that, my yong Lord? ſpeak agen.

2 *Bro.* O brother 'tis my father Shepheard ſure.

Eld: bro. *Thyrſis?* whoſe artfull ſtrains have oft de-
The huddling brook to heare his madrigale, (layd
And ſweeten'd every muskroſe of the dale,
How cam'ſt thou here good Swaine, hath any ram
Slip't from the fold, or yong kid loſt his dam,
Or ſtraggling weather the pen't flock forſook,

How couldst thou find this darke sequester'd nook?
Spir. O my lov'd masters heire, and his next joy
I came not here on such a triviall toy
As a strayd Ewe, or to pursue the stealth
Of pilfering wolfe, not all the fleecie wealth
That doth enrich these downs is worth a thought
To this my errand, and the care it brought.
But ô my virgin Ladie where is she,
How chance she is not in your companie?
Eld: bro. To tell thee sadly shepheard, without blame
Or our neglect, wee lost her as wee came.
Spir. Aye me unhappie then my fears are true.
Eld: bro. What fears good *Thyrsis*? prethee briefly
Spir. Ile tell you, 'tis not vaine, or fabulous (shew.
(Though so esteem'd by shallow ignorance)
What the sage Poëts taught by th'heav'nly Muse
Storied of old in high immortall verse
Of dire *Chimera's* and inchanted Iles
And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to hell,
For such there be, but unbeliefe is blind.
Within the navill of this hideous wood
Immur'd in cypresse shades a Sorcerer dwells
Of *Bacchus*, and of *Circe* borne, great *Comus*,
Deepe skill'd in all his mothers witcheries,
And here to every thirstie wanderer
By slie enticement gives his banefull cup
With many murmurs mixt, whose pleasing poison
The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
And the inglorious likenesse of a beast
Fixes instead, unmoulding reasons mintage
Character'd in the face; this have I learn't
Tending my flocks hard by i'th hilly crofts

That

That brow this bottome glade, whence night by night
He and his monſtrous rout are heard to howle
Like ſtabl'd wolves, or tigers at their prey
Doing abhorred rites to *Hecate*
In their obſcured haunts of inmoſt bowres.
Yet have they many baits, and guilefull ſpells
T'inveigle, and invite th'unwarie ſenſe
Of them that paſſe unweeting by the way.
This evening late by then the chewing flocks
Had ta'ne their ſupper on the ſavourie herbe
Of Knot-graſs dew-beſprent, and were in fold
I ſate me downe to watch upon a bank
With ivie-canopied, and interwove
With flaunting hony-ſuckle, and began
Wrapt in a pleaſing fit of melancholy
To meditate my rural minſtrelſie
Till fancie had her fill, but ere a cloſe
The wonted roare was up amidſt the woods,
And filld the aire with barbarous diſſonance
At which I ceas't, and liſten'd them a while
Till an unuſuall ſtop of ſudden ſilence
Gave reſpit to the drowſie frighted ſteeds
That draw the litter of cloſe-curtain'd ſleepe.
At laſt a ſoft, and ſolemne breathing ſound
Roſe like a ſteame of rich diſtill'd Perfumes
And ſtole upon the aire, that even Silence
Was tooke e're ſhe was ware, and wiſh't ſhe might
Deny her nature, and be never more
Still to be ſo diſplac't. I was all eare,
And took in ſtrains that might create a ſoule
Vnder the ribs of Death, but ô ere long
Too well I did perceive it was the voice

Of my most honour'd Lady your deare sister.
Amaz'd I stood, harrow'd with griefe and feare,
And ô poore hapleſſe nightingale thought I
How sweet thou sing'st, how neere the deadly snare!
Then downe the lawns I ran with headlong haſt
Through paths, and turnings often trod by day
Till guided by mine eare I found the place
Where that dam'd wisard hid in slie disguise
(For so by certain signs I knew) had met
Alreadie, ere my best speed could prævent
The aidleſſe innocent Ladie his wish't prey,
Who gently ask't if he had seene such two
Supposing him some neighbour villager;
Longer I durst not stay, but soone I guess't
Yee were the two she mean't, with that I sprung
Into swift flight till I had found you here,
But farther know I not. *2 Bro.* O night and shades
How are yee joyn'd with hell in triple knot
Against th'unarmed weakneſſe of one virgin
Alone, and helpleſſe! is this the confidence
You gave me brother? *Eld: bro.* Yes, and keep it still,
Leane on it safely, not a period
Shall be unsaid for me; against the threats
Of malice or of sorcerie, or that power
Which erring men call Chance, this I hold firme,
Vertue may be assail'd, but never hurt,
Surpriz'd by unjust force, but not enthrall'd,
Yea even that which mischiefe meant most harme,
Shall in the happie triall prove most glorie.
But evill on it selfe shall backe recoyle
And mixe no more with goodneſſe, when at last
Gather'd like scum, and setl'd to it selfe.

It shall bee in eternall restlesse change
Selfe fed, and selfe consum'd, if this faile
The pillar'd firmament is rottennesse,
And earths base built on stubble. But come let's on
Against th' opposing will and arme of heav'n
May never this just sword be lifted up,
But for that damn'd magician, let him be girt
With all the greisly legions that troope
Vnder the sootie flag of *Acheron*,
Harpyies and *Hydra's*, or all the monstrous bugs
'Twixt *Africa*, and *Inde*, Ile find him out
And force him to restore his purchase backe
Or drag him by the curles, and cleave his scalpe
Downe to the hipps.

Spir. Alas good ventrous youth,
I love thy courage yet, and bold Emprise,
But here thy sword can doe thee little stead,
Farre other arms, and other weapons must
Be those that quell the might of hellish charms,
He with his bare wand can unthrèd thy joynts
And crumble all thy sinewes.

Eld. Bro. Why prethee shepheard
How durst thou then thy selfe approach so neere
As to make this relation?

Spir. Care and utmost shifts
How to secure the Ladie from surprisall
Brought to my mind a certaine shepheard lad
Of small regard to see to, yet well skill'd
In every vertuous plant, and healing herbe
That spreds her verdant leafe to th' morning ray,
He lov'd me well, and oft would beg me sing,
Which when I did, he on the tender grasse

Would sit, and hearken even to extasie,
And in requitall ope his leather'n scrip,
And shew me simples of a thousand names
Telling their strange, and vigorous faculties,
Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,
But of divine effect, he cull'd me out;
The leafe was darkish, and had prickles on it,
But in another Countrie, as he said,
Bore a bright golden flowre, but not in this soyle:
Vnknowne, and like esteem'd, and the dull swayne
Treads on it dayly with his clouted shoone,
And yet more med'cinall is it then that *Moly*
That *Hermes* once to wise *Vlysses* gave,
He call'd it *Hæmony*, and gave it me
And bad me keepe it as of soveraine use
Gainst all inchantments, mildew blast, or damp
Or gastly furies apparition;
I purs't it up, but little reck'ning made
Till now that this extremity compell'd,
But now I find it trie, for by this means
I knew the foule inchanter though disguis'd,
Enter'd the very lime twigs of his spells,
And yet came off, if you have this about you
(As I will give you when wee goe) you may
Boldly assault the necromancers hall,
Where if he be, with dauntlesse hardihood
And brandish't blade rush on him, breake his glasse,
And shed the lushious liquor on the ground
But sease his wand, though he and his curst crew
Feirce signe of battaile make, and menace high,
Or like the sons of *Vulcan* vomit smoake,
Yet will they soone retire, if he but shrinke

Eld:

Eld. Bro. *Thyrsis* lead on apace Ile follow thee,
And some good angell beare a sheild before us.

The Scene Changes to a stately palace set out with all manner of delicionsnesse, soft musicke, tables spred with all dainties. Comus *appeares with his rabble, and the Ladie set in an inchanted chaire to whom he offers his glasse, which she puts by, and goes about to rise.*

Comus. Nay Ladie sit; if I but wave this wand,
Your nervs are all chain'd up in alablaster,
And you a statue; or as *Daphne* was
Root bound that fled *Apollo.*
La. Foole doe not boast,
Thou canst not touch the freedome of my mind
With all thy charms, although this corporall rind
Thou hast immanacl'd, while heav'n sees good.
Co. Why are you vext Ladie, why doe you frowne:
Here dwell no frowns, nor anger, from these gates
Sorrow flies farre: see here be all the pleasurs
That fancie can beget on youthfull thoughts
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
Brisk as the *April* buds in primrose season.
And first behold this cordial julep here
That flames, and dances in his crystall bounds
With spirits of balme, and fragrant syrops mixt.
Not that *Nepenthes* which the wife of *Thone*
In *Ægypt* gave to *Iove* borne *Helena*
Is of such power to stirre up joy as this,
To lise so friendly, or so coole to thirst.
Why should you be so cruell to your selfe,

And

And to those daintie limms which nature lent
For gentle usage, and soft delicacie?
But you invert the cov'nants of her trust,
And harshly deale like an ill borrower
With that which you receiv'd on other termes,
Scorning the unexempt condition,
By which all mortall frailty must subsist,
Refreshment after toile, ease after paine,
That have been tir'd all day without repast,
And timely rest have wanted, but faire virgin
This will restore all soone.

La. T'will not false traitor,
T'will not restore the truth and honestie
That thou hast banish't from thy tongue with lies,
Was this the cottage, and the safe abode
Thou told'st me of? what grim aspects are these,
These ougly-headed monsters? Mercie guard me!
Hence with thy brewd inchantments foule deceiver,
Hast thou betray'd my credulous innocence
With visor'd falshood, and base forgerie,
And wouldst thou seek againe to trap me here
With lickerish baits fit to ensnare a brute?
Were it a draft for *Iuno* when she banquets
I would not tast thy treasonous offer; none
But such as are good men can give good things,
And that which is not good, is not delicious
To a wel-govern'd and wise appetite.

Co. O foolishnesse of men! that lend their eares
To those budge doctors of the *Stoick* furre,
And fetch their præcepts from the *Cynick* tub,
Praising the leane, and sallow Abstinence.
Wherefore did Nature powre her bounties forth

With

With ſuch a full and unwithdrawing hand,
Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks
Thronging the ſeas with ſpawne innumerable
But all to pleaſe, and ſate the curious taſt:
And ſet to work millions of ſpinning worms,
That in their green ſhops weave the ſmooth-hair'd ſilk
To deck her Sons, and that no corner might
Be vacant of her plentie, in her owne loyns
She hutch't th'all worſhipt ore, and precious gems
To ſtore her children with; if all the world
Should in a pet of temperance feed on Pulſe,
Drink the clear ſtreame, and nothing weare but Freize,
Th'all-giver would be unthank't, would be unprais'd,
Not halfe his riches known, and yet deſpis'd,
And we ſhould ſerve him as a grudging maſter,
As a penurious niggard of his wealth,
And live like Natures baſtards, not her ſons,
Who would be quite ſurcharg'd with her own weight,
And ſtrangl'd with her waſt fertilitie; (plumes,
Th'earth cumber'd, and the wing'd aire dark't with
The heards would over-inultitude their Lords,
The ſea ore-fraught would ſwell, and th'unſought dia-
Would ſo emblaze the forehead of the Deep, (monds
And ſo beſtudde with ſtars that they below
Would grow inur'd to light, and come at laſt
To gaze upon the Sun with ſhameleſs brows.
Liſt Ladie be not coy, and be not coſen'd
With that ſame vaunted name Virginitie,
Beautie is natures coine, muſt not be hoorded,
But muſt be currant, and the good thereof
Conſiſts in mutuall and partaken bliſſe,
Vnſavourie in th'injoyment of it ſelfe

If you let ſlip time, like a neglected roſe
It withers on the ſtalke with languiſh't head.
Beautie is natures brag, and muſt be ſhowne
In courts, at feaſts, and high ſolemnities
Where moſt may wonder at the workmanſhip;
It is for homely features to keepe home,
They had their name thence; courſe complexions
And cheeks of ſorrie graine will ſerve to ply
The ſampler, and to teize the huſwifes wooll.
What need a vermeil-tinctur'd lip for that
Love-darting eyes, or treſſes like the Morne
There was another meaning in theſe gifts:
Thinke what, and be adviz'd, you are but yong yet.
La. I had not thought to have unlockt my lips
In this unhallow'd aire, but that this Jugler
Would thinke to charme my judgement, as mine eyes
Obtruding falſe rules pranckt in reaſons garbe.
I hate when vice can bolt her arguments
And vertue has no tongue to check her pride:
Impoſtor doe not charge moſt innocent nature
As if ſhe would her children ſhould be riotous
With her abundance, ſhe good catereſſe
Means her proviſion only to the good
That live according to her ſober laws
And holy dictate of ſpare Temperance,
If every juſt man that now pines with want
Had but a moderate, and beſeeming ſhare
Of that which lewdy-pamper'd Luxurie
Now heaps upon ſome few with vaſt exceſſe,
Natures full bleſſings would be well diſpent't.
In unſuperfluous even proportion,
And ſhe no whit encomber'd with her ſtore,

And

And then the giver would be better thank't,
His praiſe due paid, for ſwiniſh gluttony
Ne're looks to heav'n amidſt his gorgeous feaſt,
But with beſotted baſe ingratitude
Cramms, and blaſphemes his feeder. Shall I goe on?
Or have I ſaid enough? to him that dares
Arme his profane tongue with reproachfull words
Againſt the Sun-clad power of Chaſtitie
Faine would I ſomething ſay, yet to what end?
Thou haſt nor Eare, nor Soule to apprehend
The ſublime notion, and high myſterie
That muſt be utter'd to unfold the ſage
And ſerious doctrine of Virginitie,
And thou art worthy that thou ſhouldſt not know
More hapineſſe then this thy præſent lot.
Enjoy your deere Wit, and gay Rhetorick
That hath ſo well beene taught her dazling fence,
Thou art not fit to heare thy ſelfe convinc't;
Yet ſhould I trie, the uncontrouled worth
Of this pure cauſe would kindle my rap't ſpirits
To ſuch a flame of ſacred vehemence,
That dumb things would be mov'd to ſympathize,
And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and ſhake,
Till all thy magick ſtructures rear'd ſo high
Were ſhatter'd into heaps ore thy falſe head.
Co. She fables not, I feele that I doe feare
Her words ſet off by ſome ſuperior power;
And though not mortall, yet a cold-ſhuddring dew
Dips me all o' e, as when the wrath of *Iove*
Speaks thunder, and the chaines of *Erebus*
To ſome of *Saturns* crew. I muſt diſſemble,
And try her yet more ſtrongly. Come; no more,
 This

This is meere morall babble, and direct'
Against the canon laws of our foundation,
I must not suffer this, yet 'tis but the lees
And setlings of a melancholy blood;
But this will cure all streight, one sip of this
Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight
Beyond the blisse of dreams. Be wise, and tast.—

The brothers rush in with swords drawne, wrest his glasse out of his hand, and breake it against the ground; his rout make signe of resistance, but are all driven in; the attendant Spirit comes in.

Spir. What, have you let the false enchanter scape?
O yee mistooke, yee should have snatcht his wand
And bound him fast; without his rod revers't,
And backward mutters of dissevering power
Wee cannot free the Ladie that sits here
In stonie fetters fixt, and motionlesse;
Yet stay, be not disturb'd, now I bethinke me,
Some other meanes I have which may be us'd,
Which once of *Melibæus* old I learnt
The soothest shepheard that ere pipe't on plains.
There is a gentle nymph not farre from hence
That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream,
Sabrina is her name, a virgin pure,
Whilome shee was the daughter of *Locrine*,
That had the scepter from his father *Brute*.
She guiltlesse damsell flying the mad pursuit
Of her enraged stepdam *Guendolen*,
Commended her faire innocence to the flood
That stay'd her flight with his crosse-flowing course,

The

The water Nymphs that in the bottome playd
Held up their pearled wrists and tooke her in,
Bearing her straite to aged *Nereus* hall
Who piteous of her woes reatd her lanke head,
And gave her to his daughters to imbathe
In nectar'd lavers strewd with asphodil,
And through the porch, and inlet of each sense
Dropt in ambrosial oyles till she reviv'd,
And underwent a quicke, immortall change
Made goddesse of the river; still she retaines
Her maiden gentlenesse, and oft at eve
Visits the heards along the twilight meadows,
Helping all urchin blasts, and ill lucke signes
That the shrewd medling elfe delights to make,
Which she with precious viold liquors heales.
For which the shepheards at their festivalls
Carroll her goodnesse lowd in rusticke layes,
And throw sweet garland wreaths into her streame
Of pancies, pinks, and gaudie daffadills.
And, as the old Swaine said, she can unlocke
The clasping charme, and thaw the numming spell,
If she be right invok't in warbled Song,
For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift
To aid a virgin such as was her selfe
In hard besetting need, this will I trie
And adde the power of some adjuring verse.

Song.

Sabrina faire
Listen where thou art sitting
Vnder the glassie, coole, translucent wave,
In twisted braids of lillies knitting

The loose traine of thy amber-dropping haire,
Listen for deare honours sake
Goddesse of the silver lake
Listen and save.

Listen and appeare to us
In name of great *Oceanus*,
By th earth shaking *Neptun's* mace
And *Tethys* grave majesticke pace,
By hoarie-*Nereus* wrincled looke,
And the *Carpathian* wisards hooke,
By scalie *Tritons* winding shell.
And old sooth saying *Glaucus* spell,
By *Leucothea's* ovely hands,
And her son that rules the strands,
By *Thetis* tinsel-slipper d feet;
And the songs of *Sirens* sweet,
By dead *Parthenope's* deare tomb,
And faire *Ligea's* golden comb,
Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks
Sleeking her soft alluring locks,
By all the *Nymphs* that nightly dance
Vpon thy streams with wilie glance,
Rise, rise and heave thy rosie head
From thy coral-paven bed,
And bridle in thy headlong wave
Till thou our summons answerd have.
Listen and save.

Sabrina rises attended by water Nimphes and sings.

By the rushie fringed banke,
Where growes the willow and the osier dancke
My sliding chariot stayes,

Thick

Thicke set with agat, and the azurne sheene
Of turkkis blew, and Emrould greene
That in the channell strayes,
Whilst from off the waters fleet
Thus I set my printlesse feet
Ore the cowslips velvet head,
That bends not as I tread,
Gentle swaine at thy request
I am here.

Spir. Goddesse deare
Wee implore thy powerfull hand
To undoe the charm d band
Of true virgin here distrest,
Through the force, and through the wile
Of unblest inchanter vile.
Sab. Shepheard tis my office best
To helpe insnared chastitie;
Brightest Ladie looke on me,
Thus I sprinckle on thy brest
Drops that from my fountaine pure
I have kept of precious cure,
Thrice upon thy fingers tip,
Thrice upon thy rubied lip,
Next this marble venom'd seate
Smear'd with gummes of glutenous heate
I touch with chast palmes moist and cold,
Now the spell hath lost his hold.
And I must hast ere morning houre
To waite in *Amphitrite's* bowre.

Sabrina

Sabrina descends and the Ladie rises out of her seate.

Spir. Virgin, daughter of *Locrine*
Sprung of old *Anchises* line
May thy brimmed waves for this
Their full tribute never misse
From a thousand pettie rills,
That tumble downe the snowie hills:
Summer drouth, or singed aire
Never scorch thy tresses faire,
Nor wet Octobers torrent flood
Thy molten crystall fill with mudde,
May thy billowes rowle a shoare
The beryll, and the golden ore,
May thy loftie head be crown'd
With many a tower, and terrasse round,
And here and there thy banks upon
With groves of myrrhe, and cinnamon.

Come Ladie while heaven lends us grace,
Let us fly this cursed place,
Lest the sorcerer us intice
With some other new device.
Not a wast, or needlesse sound
Till we come to holyer ground,
I shall be your faithfull guide
Through this gloomie covert wide,
And not many furlongs thence
Is your Fathers residence,
Where this night are met in state
Many a freind to gratulate

His

His wiſh't preſence, and beſide
All the Swains that there abide,
With Iiggs, and rurall dance reſort,
Wee ſhall catch them at their ſport,
And our ſuddaine comming there
Will double all their mirth, and chere,
Come let us haſt the ſtarrs are high
But night ſits monarch yet in the mid skie.

The Scene changes preſenting Ludlow towne and the Preſidents Caſtle, then come in Countrie dancers, after them the attendant Spirit with the two Brothers and the Ladie.

Song.

Spir. *Back ſhepheards, back enough your play,*
Till next Sun-ſhine holiday,
Here be without duck or nod,
Other trippings to be trod
Of lighter toes, and ſuch Court guiſe
As Mercury *did firſt deviſe*
With the mincing Dryades
On the lawns, and on the leas.

This ſecond Song præſents them
to their father and mother.

Noble Lord, and Lady bright,
I have brought yee new delight,
Here behold ſo goodly growne.
Three faire branches of your owne,
Heav'n hath timely tri'd their youth,
Their faith, their patience, and their truth,

 And